BILL NYE AT WORK

He Joins Other Famous Literary Lights in London.

NYE AT THE AUTHORS' CLUB

What Mr. Harte Told an Englishman and the Result—Meets Douglas Sladen, Jerome and Mr. Astor.

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LONDON, Dec. 16, 1893.

London has changed a good deal since all the traveling done was by the pilgrims or crusaders. Who would believe that those tramping Britons who now take a leather hat box and go over the world, even into the heart of the desert and the jungle, a few centuries ago made their pilgrimages on foot and asked every time they saw a stone wall in the distance if that was Jerusalem?

The Yankee is found traveling everywhere that steam will take him, and he would go even if he returned penniless,


VISITING MR. ASTOR BY APPOINTMENT.

but he does not hanker for mango swamps, jungle fever and the interior of a tiger. Stanley, it is true, roamed around in Africa for some time, rescuing people, it is said, even leaving a line of negro cemeteries behind him in order to forcibly rescue a man who was perfectly comfortable and seeking seclusion at the time, but Stanley is not, strictly speaking, an American, except for lecturing purposes.

The Englishman, however, loves to chase elephants for the sport of it and is all the time looking for a place where no other white man has ever been before. And yet sometimes he believes things that no one else would swallow. On the Paris, for instance, there returned in October a young man who had been told before leaving London by an American—I think it was Bret Harte—that no one should think of going to Chicago without ample protection, for although Americans had a protective policy it did not help foreigners. As I understand it, Mr. Harte told this young man that he should be well armed, and in addition for running about of evenings he should protect himself still further by using a Siberian sleuth hound that had been dieting for a few years.

Mr. Harte told the young man—whose name was Ascott-Ascott, Esq.—that he should sleep on his arms while at Chicago and never get out of sight of his dog.

Ascott-Ascott bought himself a dog that had plain but rather strong features. Her name was Marie Antoinette. Marie Antoinette was about eight hands high and had a big bloodshot eye. Where the other eye had been there was only a damp slot.

Ascott-Ascott devoted the months of July and August to gradually getting acquainted with Marie Antoinette and convincing her that his attentions were of an honorable character and not offered simply as a means of killing time. Before there was an understanding between them Ascott-Ascott had been three or four times in the surgeon's hands, and places where he had been fluted and pinked by Marie Antoinette were caught back and gathered with surgeon's silk of different shades, so that he has daisies now and black eyed Susans embroidered all over him from designs by Marie Antoinette.

He came home disgusted, however, for the police would not let him into the fair grounds with Marie Antoinette, and they disarmed him also, so that he would not distract people's attention from the Ferris wheel. He came back on the Paris, as I said, and if you do not believe what I say of him you may ask Nugent Robinson of 142 West Ninety-fifth street, New York, U. S. A. I do not make hasty statements without proof.

Literary London is most charming and most generous. The Authors' club is situated in the heart of the universe according to the Englishman's idea—viz, near Charing Cross. You leave the station, and passing the Metropole on the left you enter Whitehall court, where you will find the clubrooms convenient for all points of interest about the great city. The club is most kindly to strangers and not too "pernicketty," as we say in North Carolina, or Caroline du Nord, as the French have it. Some pretty lightweight authors are entertained at the Authors' club. The name of one of them will be found at the foot of this letter.

Its officers are most thoroughly in earnest in making it a success. Walter Besant is vice president. He met me there.

Douglas Sladen, the globe trotting poet now with Mr. Jerome on The Idler, is the honorable secretary. Both he and Jerome are extremely busy, but never too much so to greet the pilgrim from the States and give him joy.

Jerome looks young to be famous, but he labors his regular number of hours and then flies home to the place where his heart is, which is in a beautiful part of London. I went there to dine one evening, but did not take Clarence along to show me the way. That is why I fetched up at Hammersmith. I also had Mr. Jerome's and Mr. Sladen's addresses confused. But he forgave me.

"Lost in London; or, One Half Hour With Jack the Ripper," will be the title of a little work by me, which will soon be ready for the printer.

The Pall Mall Magazine, Mr. Astor's handsome and booming periodical, is a big feather in the cape of the proprietor and its titled editors. Mr. Astor has associated with him Lord Frederic Hamilton and Sir Douglas Straight as editors, and my fondest dreams about the wealthy and titled leading lives of gaudy indolence in all cases got a severe setback when I saw Mr. Astor actually producing copy and his noble associates with their coats off, so to speak, molding public opinion, and English opinion at that, which I regard as one of the most massive jobs ever undertaken by the press.

I visited Mr. Astor at his office by appointment. Everything is done here by appointment. The man who makes my [illegible] does so also for the royal family by appointment. I allow him to do so after he gets mine done. Mr. Astor is generally at the office of the Astor estate, but when The Magazine goes to press up at the office, 18 Charing Cross, you will see him up there locking up the forms after telling Sir Douglas or Lord Frederic to write him a paragraph of 10 to 20 lines so that the page will "justify."

It proves that there is a fascination about the expression of opinion through the press, which makes many an editor almost content with meager salary, while those who are far beyond the [illegible] need of such employment are tempted to engage in it instead of polo, golf and other means of obtaining a livelihood.

The Pall Mall Magazine is already successful, and with the beginning of the year will cease to receive four foot wood on subscriptions. "I would not mind taking it," said Mr. Astor, "but here along Charing Cross I cannot get room for storing my wood, and the police will not allow me to obstruct the sidewalk. Old subscribers who are away behind on the books, say from 8 to 30 years, can slide a few loads of hay around to my stables at home, but I will not go out and help mow it away in the barn any more. I've done that for the last time."

Seriously, Mr. Astor is a picture of pluck, health and courage, and those who think he does not write for his own publications are mistaken, for he showed me the manuscript at which he had been working and kindly asked my opinion of it. Mr. Astor has not allowed his possessions to make a dignified ass of him, and there is a snap to his eye that shows good health of mind and body, together with a sense of humor which is generally God's most kindly gift to the poor.

I have often wished that I might be placed as Mr. Astor is, so that what I wrote would be printed, whether the advertisements all went in or not.

I agreed with Mr. Astor to write some of my impressions of America after I get home and publish them in Pall Mall.

Mr. Besant was in America this summer and is now congratulating himself especially in the prompt service he gets at home compared with that he has had in the States. He draws his impressions, I fear, from the restaurant service at the fair, which is not fair, so to speak. No other universal exposition has ever been compelled to feed every-


STRANGELY BEAUTIFUL.

body on the grounds, but at Chicago at least the midday meal was out of reach in the city, and there is no doubt that to feed all the multitude at once was utterly out of the question.

Mr. Besant, Mr. Gilbert Parker, Mr. Jerome, Conan Doyle and a few others are making hay while the sun shines, and though you can hardly pick up a publication without finding one of their names at the end of a story they mostly seem to lead lives of elegant ease. I do not know how they do that. I studied one of these gentlemen for 48 hours a few weeks ago to find out how he did it, so that possibly I might hereafter convey the impression that I lead a butterfly existence in low neck and short sleeves all the time; but, alas! at the end of the 48 hours I was in the veterinary hospital, suffering from Pall evil, botts and blind staggers, while my associate had ahead of him 11 stories to write in three weeks, high jinks every night and a pedestrian tour through Norway, Switzerland and Siberia besides.

I have tried every way to keep in training, but look more and more like a plum pudding eloping with the running gear of a flamingo. I exercise one day and eat oatmeal, and the balance of the week is required to rest up and regain my strength.

My literary habits, I presume, are different from any other of the great authors who have gone before me. A week ago I tried the Dickens course, which consisted in walking as far as the dry land of England extended and back before breakfast; then eating enough for two men and working till luncheon; then eating enough for four men, reading what the press said of me and sipping a churnful of gin and water; then walking through the slums and coming home with a keen appetite, ordering dinner for a thrashing crew and eating it myself; then writing seven or eight chapters of choice literature; then after jerking the children out of bed for a romp and returning them, taking a bath and "a nightcap" which for size might easily be mistaken for each other, hopping nimbly into bed before the "boogy man" gets a chance at one's pink toes and sleeping melodiously till dawn.

I've tried that one day only. I cannot repeat it.

Now I rise gently, look out of the window, gaze in my mirror, which still tells me that I am strangely beautiful, put my teeth in a beautiful cut glass bouquet holder with fresh rose water in it and then go back to bed again.

By that time a blizzard and snowstorm of calling cards begin to float up the broad onyx stairway. I tell my lackey, Clarence, to stand the callers up around the reception room and issue numbers to them as they do at a big barber shop.

Then I dress without the aid of my maid, who was objected to and discharged by my grandparents, from whom I inherit a Christian spirit and a cranberry marsh in Wisconsin.

Suffice it that I cannot keep up my training and meet all the social demands made upon me without neglecting the literary work to which I have pledged my life, my fresh young intellect and my sacred honor.

Bill Nye

TENACITY OF LIFE.

Two Stories Illustrating Some Remarkable Examples of It.

"It is an astonishing thing how some species of animals will cling to life," said Longbow as he hesitated between the choice of a coffee berry and a clove. "I read in an authentic work a short time ago that an alligator will go on fighting for hours after the brain has been removed from its body."

"How long have you been studying natural history?" asked Whoppers, with a rapid but comprehensive survey of the free lunch table.

"Not long," answered Longbow. "But I was thinking of the extraordinary way a lobster I saw yesterday held on to his time on earth. I went into the Arcadia and ordered a broiled live lobster. After I had ordered it I told old Sandfles, the head waiter, that the last one I had was evidently boiled several days before it was broiled. 'Come with me,' he says, and took me into the kitchen. There stood the cook, with uplifted knife, over an enormous green bodied lobster that was frothing at the gills with passion. The knife came down, and Mr. Lob spread himself out in two equal divisions, but was livelier than ever.

"Two more blows severed the claws from the body, but each claw continued to gnash its teeth with rage. One caught hold of the knife and tried to get it away from the cook, but the blade was so sharp it had to let go. In another minute it was writhing on the silver grill with a vigor that would have shamed any one of Mr. Fox's most active martyrs. I thought the struggle would never end, but at last, with a deep sigh, he gave up the ghost, and as he did so blushed a rosy red with shame at what he thought his weakness."

"What'll y' have?" asked Whoppers tersely.

"Same," responded Longbow, a gleam of triumph in his eye.

"As you say," said Whoppers as he paid for the drinks, "lobsters are very tenacious of life. But they're not in it with eels."

"Is this another fish story?" asked Longbow cynically, but with a faint suspicion of approaching discomfiture.

"Well, I suppose an eel is a fish as much as a lobster," retorted Whoppers curtly. "But I was going to give you a specimen of what the eel can do in the clinging to life line.

"I was fishing for pike in Sloppy creek a couple of summers ago, and one day I pulled out the largest eel I ever saw in my life. I won't tell you how large he was, because if I did you might doubt the rest of it. He was not only big, he was athletic. He was the contortionist eel that ever sucked a bait off a hook. One minute he'd be pirouetting on the end of his tail, then he'd stand on his neck and go through all the evolutions of a skirt dancer with the rest of him. I had brought with me the biggest basket that I could find in Sloppyville, but, try as I would, I couldn't double that eel up and get him in the basket.

"Finally, when we'd both agreed on a breathing spell, I picked up an ax while he was resting and, with one blow, cut him clean in two. Do you think that quieted him? Not a bit of it. The two ends looked up at me with mingled hatred and reproach and before I could get the basket anywhere near them had jumped back into the creek. Now comes the most curious part of it. What do you suppose the consequence was?"

"I haven't the remotest idea," replied Longbow uneasily.

"Well, I'll tell you," said Whoppers in that impressive way of his that always made his friends squirm. "Subsequent investigation proved that the two ends of that eel married each other and raised a whole colony of bifurcated eelets!"

Longbow looked at Whoppers long and earnestly without uttering a word.

"Mine's whisky," suggested the latter, as he returned the look with a frank, ingenuous smile.—Ernest Graham Dewey in Life.

IT WOULD COST MONEY.

If He Wanted a Canoe, He Would Have to Pay For It.

In the summer of 1885 I was traveling among the back lakes of Ontario and thought I should like to take home a good birch canoe. There was a half breed named Trueaxe who was famous for his canoes, so I sought him out and asked him if he could build me one. He was reclining in the sun by his door and whittling a stick at the time. He replied slowly:

"Well, I dunno. I'm terr'ble busy. What size do you want?"

"To hold two men and a hundred weight of baggage."

"Well, I dunno. There's a terr'ble lot of work about a canoe like that."

"I know that. I don't expect to get it for nothing."

"Ye see, it ain't like it was 20 year ago, when I could cut a dozen canoe barks right at the door."

"Of course not," I said.

"Besides, real good cedar ain't so plenty as it used to be."

"I know all that, but what is it to cost?"

"Then, I've seen the time I could jest step to the swamp with a spade and git all the tarmarac ribs I wanted in five minutes, but it ain't like that now. I suppose I'd ha' to go half a mile or more for 'em."

"I know all that. What I want to know is"——

"An maybe you think it's no trick to git jest the right sort of gum jest when ye want it for calking."

"Botheration! Are you going to tell me or not?"

"Another thing, it ain't every man you meet can build a canoe."

"Do you think I'd be here fooling around if I thought it was?"

"Well, I dunno. There's a terr'ble lot o' work about it. It's near a two weeks' job, an wages is away up now. It ain't like it was 20 year ago, I tell you. Canoe building was cheap then, but ye got to squeal for it nowadays, 'specially when they is built to order."

"Now, look here," said I. "I'm not beating you down, and I don't want any more explanation. Once for all, what would she cost?"

"Well, I dunno. Ye crowd a man when he's busy, ye have to pay for it. I dunno, but I guess ye can't get that canoe under $4, and I ain't partic'lar to do it at that even."—Forest and Stream.

Seasoned.

Mrs. Brady—Oi don't know phat's th' matther wid it. Th' mon as sold it tould me it was made ov seasoned lumber.

Brady (in disgust)—Seasoned, is it? Well, the lumber must hov been seasoned in th' fall, thin, for th' leaves are all droppin aff.—Puck.

How He Knew.

Johnny—When Mr. Hankinson comes this evening——

Willie—Mr. Hankinson ain't coming this evening. This is Mr. Ferguson's evening.

Johnny—I'll bet you my watch against your gun.

Willie (after a severe struggle with his conscience)—No, I won't take it. It's wrong to bet when you've got a sure thing. I know it's Mr. Ferguson's night, 'cause I saw Laura in the parlor a little while ago turning the clock back two hours.—Chicago Tribune.

An Unreliable Witness.

Judge Duffy—You say you never saw the watch before?

Accused—Never.

"But the witness for the people, Mrs. Peterson, swears that she saw you take the watch out of the drawer."

"Don't you believe a word that woman says. She is no good. I know all about her. She was once engaged to be married to me."—Texas Siftings.

How He Won Her.

She—Some persons claim that they cannot look from a height without wishing to cast themselves down. Did you ever have that feeling, Mr. Yearnso?

He—Once.

"Indeed. Where were you?"

"I was in an elevated car, and I saw you in the street."—New York Weekly.

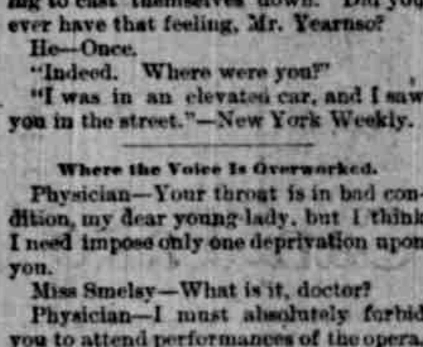
Where the Voice Is Overworked.

Physician—Your throat is in bad condition, my dear young lady, but I think I need impose only one deprivation upon you.

Miss Smelsy—What is it, doctor?

Physician—I must absolutely forbid you to attend performances of the opera.—Chicago Record.

After the Ceremony.



Groom—I say, will you see the minister for me? I—I—quite forgot the wedding fee.

Father-in-law—Young man, you are beginning early. I expected you back from your wedding tour before this began.—Life.

Generosity Run Mad.

Carleton—He was quite a generous father-in-law who gave his son-in-law a check for $100,000.

Montauk—Yes, but he's been cast in the shade by a Brooklyn man, who gave his daughter's husband a house and agreed to pay the taxes on it.—Brooklyn Eagle.

Flagging.

"The man that just passed doesn't look as if he was hard up."

"He does not."

"Yet his business is always flagging."

"Is that so? What business is he in?"

"He is the signalman at the railroad crossing."—New York Press.

The Cause of It.

"Cholly Lightpate seems to be a modest fellow. See how the blood rushes to his face when a young lady speaks to him."

"That isn't a sign of modesty. It's only an effort of nature to fill a vacuum."—Chicago Tribune.

Past the Stage of Piquing Him.

Neddye—I'm afraid Ethel's affection for me is waning.

Thomas—What makes you think so?

Neddye—She doesn't pay attention to other fellows now when I'm around.—Chicago Record.

How It Is Sometimes Done.

"How did Borsting Glubbins get his meager reputation for wit?" said the sarcastic man.

"By telling his friends that all their best stories were chestnuts."—Washington Star.

Necessary For Sailing.

Charley Stasal—I wish that we might sail forever down the stream of life.

Minnie Clipper—So we can, if you will raise the wind.—Puck.

Not a Flatterer.

She—All of which only convinces me that you married me for my money.

He—Well, it may not seem probable, but I honestly loved you.—Life.

Too Bad.

Some persons develop a positive genius for looking on the dark side. An exchange gives this example:

There was a very rich farmer who would never own that he had anything to be thankful for in the way of profits. The parson once said to him during a fine harvest season:

"Come, Mr. Jones, you can have nothing to complain about this year, at all events!"

"I can't say that," said the farmer.

"Still you can't say what is amiss."

He thought a bit, and then replied very grudgingly, "Well, you see, there will be no spoiled hay for the young calves."—Youth's Companion.

Ingenious, Anyway.

"I appreciate the service you do me, sir, in offerin me ther job," said Roadside Workem, "but I cannot take it."

"Why not?"

"W'en I think of the thousands of my fellow men who might have it—how can I deprive them of ther means of gainin an honest livelihood by takin of it myself?"—Chicago Record.

No Doubt of It.

"They may talk all they please about the indifference of those who labor, but there's at least one class of men who put a great deal of heart in their work."

"Who are they?"

"The fellows who make sentimental valentines."—Buffalo Courier.